

St Martins News

St Martins Housing Trust

Addressing the needs of homeless people in Norwich and Norfolk since 1972

35 Bishopgate, Norwich, NR1 4AA • Tel: (01603) 667706 • Fax: (01603) 663845
Email: enquiries@stmartinshousing.org.uk • Website: www.stmartinshousing.org.uk

December 2011

A Merry Christmas and a Happy 2012 to all our supporters from everyone at St Martins Housing



**Dr. Jenny Blyth,
Deputy Chair of
Trustees, writes:**

I became a charity Trustee at St. Martins after a career spent in the NHS. My last job was as Consultant in Palliative Care at Priscilla Bacon Lodge, Norwich. In a nutshell it was all about trying to get the best out of life against the odds.

A hospice can be a demanding and emotionally challenging place to work but the satisfaction when the problems begin to be surmounted is immense – both for the carers and the cared for.

It seems to me that my former colleagues in the hospice movement share the same qualities as our staff team at St. Martins – compassion, optimism professionalism, and tenacity, even when things look bleak.

I am proud to be associated with St. Martins. Those that we help have not had many opportunities to shine in life. St. Martins gives them that chance – this Christmas

40 years of service

**Derek Player,
General Manager
of the Trust,
writes:**



2012 marks our 40th anniversary. As Alan Webster, Dean of Norwich (1970 – 78), and later Dean of St. Pauls, writes in his book *Reaching for Reality: Sketches from the Life of the Church*, it was in 1972 that “a Norwich housing estate curate spent every night for a month being alongside and making friends with the bedless in porches of shops and churches or on bombsites”. The curate was the Very Revd Colin Slee OBE who worked on the Heartease estate. He went on to become the Dean of Southwark. Colin died this year aged 65 and we remember him as one of the leading lights in the foundation of this charity.

1972 was a time of optimism in social welfare. The new Social Services Departments held out hope that services for

children and older people, and for people with learning disabilities and mental health issues would dramatically improve. And they did! But it took another 30 years before services for the homeless really began to improve. In Norwich that meant three decades of struggling to provide a basic service in the over-crowded, unhygienic and cold (but much loved) church in Oak Street that was the Norwich Nightshelter. The last ten years have seen the opening of the Bishopbridge House hostel and some much better accommodation projects. We also now have the range of support services you can read about on these pages.

Will Norwich need these services for homeless people in another 40 years? That's too far ahead for many of us. We are faced with today's challenge of preserving our existing services and making our charitable resources go as far as possible to meet the needs of as many people as possible. As most people do at Christmas we'll spare a few minutes to look back across the years. Then we'll get on with the task of tailoring our services for those who turn up homeless at our door in 2012.



A day in the life of a worker on our rough sleepers team

6am It's a dark and cold morning so I meet with my colleague at a well-lit café to begin our out-reach session searching for rough sleepers in Norwich city centre.

6.15am We check known sites around Gentlemen's Walk, the market area and the Arcade. We think we know all the places where people bed down but we often find new ones.

6.40am Find someone sleeping on St Stephen's. We have a chat to establish the person's immediate welfare needs and offer them a hot drink. Arrange to meet them in the Arc Day Centre (managed by the Salvation Army in Pottergate) later that morning.

7am Check an underground car park, a known place for rough sleepers. None found, but discover recent evidence of bedding (flattened cardboard and food wrappers).

7.15am Look for someone referred to us behind a building in the bin storage area but no one found. Make a note to check again on our next outreach.



7.30am Check known rough sleeping areas around Tombland, the Cathedral grounds and Prince of Wales Road but no one found (although bedding spotted).

8am Continue the Outreach Session at the Arc Day Centre. Have breakfast with service users and chat to some of the Big Issue sellers. Early phone call with a Social Worker regarding our concerns for a current rough sleeper believed to have mental health issues. Complete an assessment record about someone due to be made homeless. We refer him to the City Reach primary health clinic at our Westwick Street project so he can renew his prescriptions and link in with the Alcohol and Drugs Team.

10am Move on to the Housing Department at Norwich City Council. Speak to some of the Housing Advisors there about current cases and seek advice about a new case. Complete a second assessment for someone who is due to be evicted the following week and would then be homeless.

12pm Back to the team's office at Bishopbridge House to complete our record of the session, and update case notes and files.

12.30 The team's important weekly meeting. We discuss all known current rough sleepers and sofa surfers, and share our case notes and the details of meetings we have attended over the past week.

2pm End of shift.

The team is based at Bishopbridge House, the Trust's 30-bed direct access hostel off Riverside Road. This means they can react quickly by recommending people in priority need as soon as beds become available.

Putting residents first - Inspection reports published

In July the Commission for Quality Care (CQC) carried out a review of our long-stay facility for 22 people at Highwater House, Norwich. Residents told the inspectors that "...staff encouraged them to make changes to their lifestyle, always treated them with respect and that their privacy was respected".

Turning their attention to the Trust's other care home in September - Carrow Hill House - inspectors noted residents told them that "...staff were kind, treated them with respect, understood their problems and took time to talk to them. One stated

that staff members (were) friendly and approachable and another told us (there were)... lots of staff who accept me and encourage me to make changes in my life."

The two care homes - Highwater House and Carrow Hill House - are home to 22 and 16 people respectively, all of whom have experienced periods of homelessness and have mental health issues. They also have problems with alcohol and/or drugs. The CQC reports are published in full on www.cqc.org.uk



...ing into action



Team Leader Barry Allard and LEAP workers and volunteers

A partnership of the Trust and Norwich City Council has been awarded a 3 year grant from the Big Lottery Fund to manage a service for homeless people in Norwich called LEAP - the Learning, Employment and Accommodation project.

The aim is to get as many people as possible into skills training, into tenancies and into work.

LEAP
7 Upper Goat Lane
Norwich NR2 1EW
Tel (01603) 627841

The Trust's Carol service

**2pm, on Thursday,
8 December 2011
at St Peter Mancroft
(opposite the Forum)**



Under-1-Roof, our Training and Development Centre in Westwick Street: 2 years old in January



Law student and Blur drummer, Dave Rowntree, who has a home near Norwich led a jam session in October for some of our service users. In a noisy and exciting climax the Rolling Stones' classic "Gimme Shelter" was belted out.



Dave drives the beat from his drum kit.



"I wanted to write to say thank you for my placement at U-1-R."

**Rosie,
Social Work student**

Firstly can I say how amazing it was to be able to come in over the last month and get to know everyone at U-1-R and see the brilliant learning opportunities you are offering to people who might not be able to find such a welcoming environment elsewhere. I really enjoyed it, and it was also great to get to know you (John, Centre Co-ordinator) and the volunteers too - it's such a cool team of people running the centre!

I'd worked in a soup kitchen but had never had the opportunity to have real conversations with people who were homeless, so it was interesting to chat with the service users at U-1-R. The ex-service users who are now volunteers were really inspiring too and it was a privilege to hang out with them. What a great group of people. Thank you John for making my placement at U-1-R so valuable.

www.stmartinshousing.org.uk
to see the full range of learning opportunities at U-1-R and the Trust's Annual Report

Your non-cash donations really count

With the Norwich Food Bank project going from strength to strength this year we have decided to channel our dry goods food donations to them. They are able to put together nutritionally-balanced, 3 day packs for our service users. However we continue to make good use of all your fresh food donations at harvest time and throughout the year.



Ricky and Sarah in the kitchen at U-1-R preparing food using Harvest Festival donations.

The cookery course at U-1-R runs for 6 weeks and is always fully booked. We teach a range of cooking types, ie fish, meat, vegetarian, desserts etc.

I have a budget of £1 per head for ingredients.

We always end up making loads, and

everyone gets a recipe. All the people on the course get to eat and we feed any other learners floating around Under-1-Roof who are hungry.

The fresh fruit and vegetables from the Harvest Festival were used to make fruit pies and chutneys to sell at the Christmas Fayre.

Sarah

Christmas Fayre on Friday 9 December at Under-1-Roof, 11am to 3pm



We would like to invite the public to come along to our Christmas Fayre on the 9th December and have a look around the Centre.

**Under-1-Roof
100-102 Westwick Street
NR2 4SZ**



Our residents mix it with local celebs



Our 30 bed hostel Bishopbridge House won an "outstanding achievement award" at the Norwich Learning Awards this year. The award was presented to Jason (left) and Stuart by rock musician Rick Wakeman and Norwich City legend, Darren Huckerby.

Just 2 of our loyal supporters



Tenancy starter-kits (in shoe boxes) donated by members of the Octagon Unitarian Chapel in Norwich. So useful!

Thank you John Lewis plc for making us your charity 2011/12. Your donations of household items have really brightened resident's bedrooms in our properties.

Printed on 80% recycled paper